23: Franck--292 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 227

"... Curious wigwam-shaped fish-traps, held down by heaps of stones on a platform part way up them, are placed at the heads of rapids on the Nam-khan. Then there were weirs, draining into jug-shaped baskets with small entrances which forked prongs made almost impossible as exits, with a single opening in them just wide enough for the narrow pirogues to slip through, and even these were made impassable to the fish by a row of bamboos, one end of each held down in the river and the upper floating one pointing down-stream."

Ox hides	58 to 65 francs per 100 kilograms 237
Bones of tigers and other cats	58 to 75 " " " " 438
Pelts of tigers, panthers and other large cats	3 francs to 12 francs and 50 centimes apiece 435
Anteater scales (without the skin)	50 to 72 francs per 100 kilograms
Anteater hides (with scales)	46 to 50 " " " "
Skins of various monkeys	83 to 88 " " " "
Tortoise shells	37 francs and 50 centimes per 100 kilograms.

Fishing, preserved fish

Laos, with its extensive hydrological network and its watercourses of all sizes, is a fishing land par excellence. We have already noted the chief varieties of fish which populate its rivers, and have seen that most of them are represented by large-sized specimens. 226

Since the produce of fishing makes a considerable contribution to the food supply of the inhabitants, it has been necessary to create devices and combine various means for capturing this prey.

The methods, primitive at first, have been increasingly perfected, and each one has been modified so that it is adapted to some particular feature either of the watercourses or of the fish.

The devices used today are wholly made by the inhabitants. They vary greatly in form and--the fact is worth noting--are much like those used in Europe. Indeed, the floating line is common, but in its most rudimentary form, with a thorn for a hook and then the ground-line and long-line. There are also nets in great abundance, and they are identical with the ones found among our fishermen. The most common ones are the seine, the cast-net, the square dipping-net, the shrimping-net, the hoop-net, the landing-net and the large trammel. All this equipment is supplemented with bottles, [350] single and double bow-nets and traps. The Laotians also build large barrages across watercourses and provide them with corridors leading to bow-nets or hoop-nets. 226 227

Hiding places in the form of fixed huts on the watercourses are used for spear fishing. A light in these huts attracts the fish and the native, who is armed with a hardwood fork, spears it as soon as it comes within range. [Illustration here]

"Pa-Niang," formed of slices from a large fish which have been smoked. 226

"Pa-Heng," or a small dried fish. 262

"Pa-Khem" corresponds fairly closely to our salted and dried fish of the sardine type known as Nantes, which are left in salt for only a few days.

Finally, "Pa-Dek" is the form in which most of the large varieties of fish are preserved, and is an almost indispensable part of the native food supply. To prepare Pa-Dek the meat is cut into small pieces and ground in a mortar with salt and pepper so as to produce a kind of paste which is then put in jars with salt. The resulting brine helps to preserve the product (1). 263

(1) The price of Pa-Dek varies between 18 and 25 francs per hundred kilograms. This is the "Mam" of the Annamites.

The price of fish is subject to fluctuations, depending on the scarcity of it. The large fish of which we have just been speaking sell at prices between one and forty francs, depending on their weight and their abundance on the market. 226 435

Eels, shrimp of the prawn type and crabs are also found in the ponds and rivers of Laos during the rainy season, and in the water-courses there are various edible shellfish [353] such as the river mussel and small winkle. The ponds and swamps shelter several varieties of frogs, some of which reach an enormous size. All of them are edible, and are caught with a red ribbon on the end of a line fastened to a long bamboo pole. 226 [227]

II

PRESENT-DAY CROPS

Together with an enumeration of the crops grown in Laos we should like to be able to give the area which each occupies and the cultivable surfaces with the nature of the soil and the type of crops which would be suited to them, but as the Superior Resident states in his report for 1899: 241 311

"We have been in the colony for too short a time to have been able to set up a cadastral registry service. In view of the large area of the territory (267,000 square kilometers), the small and sparse population which inhabits it (3,7 inhabitants per square kilometer in

'173, Deydier --64 N B-3 (no date) 1952, AM1 Indochina
(Ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Fig. VII. Valley of the Nam Hou. Rapids and fishing gear (Cl. Presse Information).